

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BEIRUT 00078 061234Z

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-05 H-01

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 SSM-03 OMB-01 AID-05 IO-13 /101 W

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FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6363

INFO SIT-REP COLLECTIVE 309

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

USNMR SHAPE BELGIUM

CINCUSNAVEUR, LONDON ENG

CINCUSAFE RAMSTEIN AB GER

COMSIXTHFLT

CTF SIX ZERO

CTF SIX ONE

CTF SIX TWO

CTG SIX ZERO PT TWO

FICEURLANT NORFOLK VA

FOSIF ROTA SPAIN

DIA WASHDC

CINCUSAREUR HEIDELBERG GER

USDOCOSOUTH NAPLES IT

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 0078

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS PINT MILI ASEC LE

SUBJ: LEBANESE SITUATION DECEMBER 30 - JANUARY 5

REF: BEIRUT 6561 (DTG 310911Z DEC 77)

1. SUMMARY: THIS WEEK THE BEIRUT PRESS CRITICIZED RECENT U.S. STATEMENTS ON THE PALESTINIAN QUESTION, BUT GOL LEADERS REMAINED SILENT. YASIR ARAFAT CONDEMNED U.S. MIDDLE EAST POLICY AT A RALLY
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PAGE 02 BEIRUT 00078 061234Z

IN BEIRUT MARKING THE 13TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE PALESTINIAN REVOLUTION. FIGHTING INCREASED IN SOUTH LEBANON. A BOMB EXPLODED AT THE HOME OF FORMER MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS MALEK SALAM. TAPLINE OFFICIALLY INFORMED THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT THAT IT WOULD CONTINUE TO SUSPEND THE DELIVERY OF CRUDE OIL TO REFINERIES IN ZAHRANI AND TRIPOLI. THERE WERE MORE KIDNAPPINGS IN BEIRUT. END SUMMARY.

2. COMMENTS ON U.S. STATEMENTS.

GOL LEADERS HAVE NOT COMMENTED PUBLICLY ON RECENT STATEMENTS BY PRESIDENT CARTER AND NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISOR BRZEZINSKI ON THE PALESTINIAN QUESTION, ALTHOUGH FOREIGN MINISTER BOUTROS PUBLICLY EXPRESSED CONCERN ON DECEMBER 30 THAT THE ISRAELI PEACE PLAN WOULD LEAD TO THE PERMANENT SETTLEMENT OF PALESTINIANS IN LEBANON. THE BEIRUT PRESS HAS, HOWEVER, REACTED NEGATIVELY, ALTHOUGH ALSO REPORTING U.S. CLARIFICATIONS. WRITING IN THE INDEPENDENT FRENCH LANGUAGE DAILY L'ORIENT-LE JOUR ON DECEMBER 31, FOR EXAMPLE, COLUMNIST ISSA GHURAYIB SAID THAT BRZEZINSKI'S "CYNICAL OUTBURST WAS A SORRY CARICATURE OF PEACE." THE SAME DAY, HOWEVER, THE PAPER ALSO HEADLINED THAT "WASHINGTON DENIES ITS SUPPORT OF BEGIN'S POSITION ON GAZA AND THE WEST BANK" (SEE BEIRUT 6560 AND BEIRUT 0044).

3. PALESTINIANS HOLD RALLY IN BEIRUT.

A. PLO LEADER YASIR ARAFAT AND PFLP CHIEF GEORGE HABASH ADDRESSED A RALLY AT THE BEIRUT MUNICIPAL STADIUM ON JANUARY 1 TO CELEBRATE THE "13TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ARMED STRUGGLE OF THE PALESTINIAN REVOLUTION." ABOUT 2,000 ARMED PALESTINIANS PARADED BEFORE AN ESTIMATED AUDIENCE OF 8,000 PEOPLE, ACCORDING TO DATT SOURCES. (ARAFAT AND HABASH, THE PRINCIPAL REJECTIONIST LEADER, HAVE APPEARED TOGETHER A NUMBER OF TIMES IN PUBLIC SINCE THE DECEMBER 5 PALESTINIAN COMMUNIQUE ISSUED AT TRIPOLI. BEFORE THAT TIME, THEY

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 BEIRUT 00078 061234Z

HAD NOT APPEARED TOGETHER AT LEAST SINCE THE END OF THE 1975/76 FIGHTING IN LEBANON.)

B. COMMENTING ON RECENT STATEMENTS BY U.S. OFFICIALS, ARAFAT WAS QUOTED BY THE BEIRUT ENGLISH DAILY IKE AS SAYING IT WAS NOW "BYE-BYE AMERICAN INTERESTS ALTOGETHER IN THE MIDDLE EAST." OFFICIAL PALESTINIAN MEDIA DID NOT QUOTE ARAFAT AS MAKING SUCH AN ASSERTION, ALTHOUGH THE PLO NEWSPAPER FALASTINE AL THAWRA CITED REUTERS AS SAYING HE HAD STRONGLY CONDEMNED PRESIDENT CARTER'S POLICY IN THE MIDDLE EAST.

4. FIGHTING PICKS UP IN SOUTH LEBANON.

THERE WAS INCREASED FIGHTING IN SOUTH LEBANON DURING THE REPORTING PERIOD, WITH RELATIVELY HEAVY EXCHANGES OF FIRE BETWEEN CHRISTIANS AND PALESTINIANS, APPARENTLY INITIATED BY THE FORMER. ON THE EVENING OF JANUARY 2-3, ISRAELI ARTILLERY FIRED INTO LEBANON, WITH THE ROUNDS IMPACTING EAST OF AL MARI, ACCORDING TO VARIOUS SOURCES.

5. MALEK SALAM'S HOUSE BOMBED.

A. ON DECEMBER 31 A BOMB EXPLODED AT THE HOME OF FORMER MINISTER

OF PUBLIC WORKS MALEK SALAM. THE EXPLOSION CAUSED SOME PROPERTY DAMAGE, BUT NO CASUALTIES. SALAM IS A BROTHER OF FORMER PRIME MINISTER SAEB SALAM AND A PROMINENT MEMBER OF THE ISLAMIC GROUPING. THE HOME OF ANOTHER PROMINENT MEMBER OF THE ISLAMIC GROUPING, SHAFIQ WAZZAN, HAD ALSO BEEN BOMBED ON DECEMBER 29 (SEE SITREP DECEMBER 29), SHORTLY AFTER HE CAME OUT AGAINST THE PERMANENT SETTLEMENT OF PALESTINIANS IN SOUTH LEBANON. ON DECEMBER 30, A BOMB EXPLODED IN THE GARDEN OF FORMER PRIME MINISTER TAKI-IDDIN SULH IN BEIRUT, BUT THERE WERE NO CASUALTIES.

B. ON JANUARY 2, LEBANESE POLICE DEFUZED A TWO-KILOGRAM BOMB PLACED NEAR THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE SUDANESE ADF FORCES ON PHONECIA STREET IN DOWNTOWN BEIRUT. ACCORDING TO ONE LEBANESE OFFICIAL, THIRTY MINOR EXPLOSIONS WERE REPORTED DURING THE FIRST CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 BEIRUT 00078 061234Z

THREE DAYS OF 1978.

6. TAPLINE CONTINUES SUSPENSION.

TAPLINE HAS OFFICIALLY INFORMED LEBANESE GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS THAT IT WILL CONTINUE TO MAINTAIN THE SUSPENSION THAT BEGAN DECEMBER 8 OF CRUDE OIL DELIVERIES TO THE REFINERIES IN ZAHRANI AND TRIPOLI. THE COMPANY BEGAN THE SUSPENSION IN RESPONSE TO LABOR UNION DEMANDS THAT THE WORKWEEK FOR TAPLINE WORKERS IN LEBANON BE LIMITED TO 36 HOURS AT PAY FOR 40 HOURS. TAPLINE, SUPPORTED BY SAUDI ARABIA AND THE GOL MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM, MAINTAINS THAT LABORERS HAVE A CONTRACTUAL OBLIGATION TO WORK 40 HOURS. TAPLINE'S TANKS AT ZAHRANI CURRENTLY HOLD ABOUT 900,000 BARRELS, ENOUGH TO SUPPLY THE REFINERIES UNTIL JANUARY 31. TAPLINE HOLDS THE TRUMP CARDS HERE AND SHOULD PREVAIL.

7. KIDNAPPINGS.

ON DECEMBER 31 LEBANESE MOSLEMS KIDNAPPED AND BEAT TWO CHRISTIAN FIGHTERS WHO HAD CROSSED INTO WEST BEIRUT. THE CHRISTIANS RETALIATED BY HOLDING ABOUT 20 MOSLEMS HOSTAGE IN EAST BEIRUT. BOTH SIDES RELEASED THEIR CAPTIVES ON JANUARY 3. PARKER

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Message Attributes

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Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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Errors: N/A
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